

DOES *VIREO GILVUS SWAINSONII* OCCUR IN UTAH?

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While attempting to subspecifically identify a series of forty-two Warbling Vireos collected in south-central, western Utah for a recent work (Worthen, 1968), a problem of subspecific distribution became apparent. Twomey (1942), Woodbury and Russell (1945), Behle (1948), Woodbury, Cottam, and Sugden, (1949), Behle (1955), A.O.U. Check-list Committee (1957), Behle, (1958), and Behle (1960), state that *Vireo gilvus swainsonii* Baird occurs or may occur in Utah. Most of these authors designate the subspecies as a migrant but some record it as a summer resident in certain localized areas of the state.

I examined a series of 200 birds in the collection of the University of Utah and can find little evidence that *V. g. swainsonii* occurs in Utah. It should be pointed out, however, that I have not examined any topotypes or any specimens positively identified as *V. g. swainsonii*. Characteristics were used that were given by the original describer (Oberholser, 1932) and by Sibley (1940).

Virtually all specimens in the University of Utah Museum that have been identified as *V. g. swainsonii* are birds taken in August and September in fresh fall plumage. Furthermore, six of the seven birds taken by myself in August (Worthen, 1968) have characteristics of *V. g. swainsonii*. There is a decided paucity of birds taken in spring in the collection of the University of Utah referable to "*swainsonii*". These data present two possible hypotheses: that this subspecies commonly migrates south through Utah but usually migrates north by some other route, or that the observed relationship is caused by something other than patterns of migration. If the latter is true the factors which seem to be responsible are those dealing with molt and wear of plumage. Bent (1950:366) states that,

There is a partial postjuvenile molt, beginning early in August, which involves the contour plumage, and the wing coverts, but not the rest of the wings nor the tail. This produces a first winter plumage which is practically indistinguishable from the winter plumage of the adult, greener above and more buffy white below than the previous plumage.

Dr. Dwight says that the nuptial plumage is acquired by wear, but Ned Dearborn (1907) found March and April specimens of the western race undergoing a scattered molt on the head and breast.

It seems apparent that the fresh fall plumage of the resident subspecies (*V. g. leucopolius* (Oberholser)) would more closely approximate the characteristics of *V. g. swainsonii* than breeding birds of

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V. g. leucopolius in worn and faded plumage. It is, therefore, my contention that most (if not all) of the "*swainsonii*" in the collection of University of Utah are misidentified through confusion of variation in seasonal plumage with subspecific variation and are, in actuality, birds assignable to *V. g. leucopolius* in fresh fall plumage.

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